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# HARIJAN

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[ FIVE PICE

## DON'T DIVIDE THE HOUSE

[The following is a summary of Gandhiji's Hindi speech at the A. I. C. C. meeting introducing the Bardoli Resolution.

M. D.

### An Ordinary Mortal

I was not a little perturbed when the Maulana raised me sky-high. I do not live up in the air. I am of the earth, earthy. I have never seen an aeroplane. I am like you, an ordinary mortal made of common clay.

The question of ahimsa would not have come up before you, had it not come up before the Working Committee in Bardoli. And it was well that it came up. The result has been good, not bad. But before I say anything on this question, let me make one or two things clear.

### A Political Method

I am, as I have said, an ordinary mortal like you. Had that not been the case, we should not have been able to work together these twenty years. Ahimsa with me is a creed, the breath of my life. But it is never as a creed that I placed it before India, or for the matter of that before anyone except in casual informal talks. I placed it before the Congress as a political method, to be employed for the solution of political questions. It may be it is a novel method, but it does not on that account lose its political character. I tried it for the first time in South Africa — after I found that all the so-called constitutional remedies, with which Congress work in India had made me familiar, had failed. The question there was exclusively of the political existence of Indians who had settled in South Africa as merchants, petty hawkers, etc. It was for them a question of life and death, and it was in dealing with it that this method of non-violence came to me. The various measures that I adopted there were not the work of a visionary or a dreamer. They were the work of an essentially practical man dealing with practical political questions. As a political method, it can always be changed, modified, altered, even given up in preference to another. If, therefore, I say to you that our policy should not be given up today, I am talking political wisdom. It is political insight. It has served us in the past, it has enabled us to cover many stages towards Independence, and it is as a politician that I suggest to you that it is a grave mistake to contemplate its abandonment. If I have carried the Congress with me all these years, it is in my capacity as a politician. It is hardly fair to describe my method as religious because it is new.

The Maulana has affectionately used high words of praise for me, but I cannot accept them. I have

been taunted as a Bania. I regard that as a certificate of merit. The article in my possession is an invaluable pearl. It has to be weighed in the proper scales, and those who can pay the price for it can have it. It cannot be bartered away even for Independence.

Non-violence has brought us near to Swaraj as never before. We dare not exchange it even for Swaraj. For Swaraj thus got will be no true Swaraj. The question is *not* what we will do after Swaraj. It is whether under given conditions we can give up non-violence to win Swaraj. Again, do you expect to win real Independence by abandoning non-violence? Independence for me means the Independence of the humblest and poorest amongst us. It cannot be obtained by joining the war. For the Congress to join any war before the attainment of Complete Independence is to undo the work of the past twenty years.

### Inexpedient to Divide House

And yet why is it that I stand before you to plead with you to accept the resolution, and not even to divide the house? The reason is that the resolution reflects the Congress mind. It undoubtedly is a step backward. We have not a clean slate to write on. Our elders have taken a step which has produced world-wide reactions. To alter the resolution out of shape is to ignore these. It would be unwise to change the policy adopted by the Working Committee. The world had a right to think that the Working Committee's policy would be endorsed by you. At one time I had thought of dividing the A. I. C. C., but I saw that it would be a mistake. It would be almost violence. Non-violence does not act in the ordinary way.

Sometimes a step back is a prelude to a step forward. It is highly likely that our step will be of that character.

The resolution is a mirror in which all groups can see themselves. The original was Jawaharlalji's draft, but it was referred to a sub-committee at whose hands it has undergone material changes. The original had left no room for Rajaji to work. The sub-committee opened a tiny window for him to squeeze in. Jawaharlalji's opposition to participation in the war effort is almost as strong as mine, though his reasons are different. Rajaji would participate, if certain conditions acceptable to the Congress were fulfilled. The non-violent non-cooperators like Rajendra Babu have certainly a place, for, until the remote event takes place, non-violence rules supreme.

It is no longer open to the Government and the Congress critics to say that the Congress has banged the door to negotiation on the impossible or unpolitical ground of non-violence. The resolution throws the



burden on the Government of wooing the Congress on the basis of participation in the war effort. That nothing is to be expected from the Government is probably too true. Only the resolution puts the Congress right with the expectant world. And since there is a party in the Congress who will welcome an honourable offer that will satisfy the rigidest test, it is as well that the resolution has accommodated this party. It is likely in the end to make all of one mind. Out and out believers in non-violence of the political type have the whole field open to them.

When there was a talk of the A. I. C. C. being possibly divided, several people contemplated the prospect with trepidation, lest the Congress should again listen to mad Gandhi's advice in order to retain his leadership, and become a religious organisation instead of the political organisation that it has been all these years. Let me disabuse them of their fear, and say that the Congress can do no such thing, that we have not wasted the past twenty years. All that the Congress has decided to do is that it will allow the world to deal with it in terms that the world can understand, and if the terms are good enough, it will accept them. But you may be also sure that the Congress will not be easily satisfied. It will go on repeating 'Not this', 'Not this', until it wins the real commodity it wants. You will, therefore, say exactly what you want, and I will also say all I want. That is why I have decided to issue the three weeklies, and I will go on venting my views therein with the fullest freedom, as long as I am allowed to do so. In the meanwhile, if you can get what you want, you will strike the bargain, and you may be sure that I will not shed a single tear. I therefore do not want to cheat the world of its jubilation over the resolution. I do not want the Congress to look ridiculous in the eyes of the world. I do not want it to be said that in order to retain my leadership you bade good-bye to your convictions.

### Operative Part

Some friends have complained that the resolution has no operative clause. The complaint is true so far as the resolution is concerned. The resolution had to be merely explanatory. It is addressed less to Congressmen, it is addressed to the world. It is not even addressed to the Government.

But there are the instructions about the constructive programme for Congressmen. They form the operative part. It is a substitute for civil disobedience and the parliamentary programme. Civil disobedience has been wisely reserved for me as an expert. It is good that, so long as I am alive and well in mind, it is so reserved. And so far as I am concerned, there will be none, if the Government do not interfere with *Harijan*. For this weekly will constitute enough propaganda against all war. I have no ill-will against Britishers, and for that matter against Germans, Italians or Japanese. I can have none against the Russians who have done great things for the proletariat. The Chinese sail in the same boat with us. I would like all these nations to be at peace with one another. I would like to think that India will, through her non-violence, be a messenger of peace to the whole world. Even political non-violence has potency of which we have no

conception. *Harijan* will deliver the message of peace from week to week. But if this is not permitted, then will be the time for civil disobedience as a token. I want every worker to be out for constructive work. And if I am rendered penless, I may become the sole resister. But I have no fixed plan. Events will show the way.

So much for civil disobedience.

### Parliamentary Programme

Though the parliamentary mentality has come to stay, in my opinion the parliamentary programme can have no place in Congress work so long as the war lasts. The Congress cannot handle it without identifying itself with the war effort. I have always held that at all times it is the least part of a nation's activity. The most important and permanent work is done outside. Legislators are not the masters but servants of their electors — the nation. The less, therefore, we look at and depend upon parliaments the better. Power resides in the people either through their arms or through their civil disobedience, more comprehensively described as non-violent non-cooperation. But the power of non-cooperation comes only through solid, incessant constructive work. Non-violent strength comes from construction, not destruction. Hence today the constructive programme is the only thing before the Congress. And in this all parties are at one.

### No Split

Do not please go away with the idea that there is a rift in the Congress lute. The Working Committee has worked like members of a happy family. Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. It will require much more than differences of opinion to estrange us. We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this that when I am gone he will speak my language.

Let there be no lack of understanding or zeal among Congressmen. Neither Jawaharlal nor Rajaji will let you be idle. I certainly will not. Lastly, let those who think the constructive programme is insipid know that there is nothing in the Working Committee's resolutions to prevent a Congressman at his own risk from leading civil disobedience — individual or mass. If he succeeds, he will win nothing but praise from all. But let me warn enthusiasts that they will not handle the weapon with any success. They will only damage themselves and the cause by any hasty or ignorant action. And let me say as your expert that those who regard the constructive programme as insipid do not know what non-violence is and how it works.

Some Congressmen are sorry because I have relinquished the leadership of the Congress. You have not lost me. You would lose me only if I ceased to be loyal to the Congress, only if I became a visionary, only if I ceased to be a practical man. It is not at Bardoli that I left the Congress; I did so seven years



ago at Bombay, and I did so in order to be able to render greater service to the country and the Congress. Colleagues like the Sardar and Rajendra Babu are not happy over the resolution, but I am asking them not to leave the Working Committee. But even if they leave the Congress, the Congress is not going to cease to function. Its work will go on, whether they are there or not. No man, however great, is indispensable to the Congress. Those who built up the Congress like Dadabhai, Pherozeshah and Tilak are no more, but the Congress still functions. For they have left for us an edifice to work upon and expand. And if the passing away of these leaders has not made any difference, why should the withdrawal of other leaders make any?

Sevagram, 19.1.42

### WORKING COMMITTEE'S INSTRUCTIONS

This meeting of the A. I. C. C. endorses the following instructions issued by the Working Committee and calls upon all Provincial and other Subordinate Congress Committees to give effect to them within their respective areas. The Provincial Congress Committees are authorised to supplement them wherever necessary. The Committee expects every member of an elective Congress Committee to devote himself actively to the execution of some item of this programme, and to send periodical reports of the work done by him to his Committee:

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organisation is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the co-operative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people

and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organised in both the urban and rural areas. Such organisations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence, and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may co-operate with other organisations working for similar ends. This volunteer organisation is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use. Big scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war, and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a wide-spread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly, suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked up with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life. The Committee would especially recommend to the villagers the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In cases of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

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## HARIJAN

Jan. 25

1942

## REAL WAR EFFORT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The greatest need of the immediate present is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. There is already scarcity in the land both of food and clothing. As the war progresses, both the scarcities must increase. There are no imports from outside, either of food-stuff or of cloth. The well-to-do may not feel the pinch as yet or at all, but the poor are feeling it now. The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty? He who saves gains as much, that is to say he produces as much. Hence those who feel for the poor, those who would be one with them must curtail their wants. There are many ways. I shall only mention some here. There is much, too much food eaten and wasted by the well-to-do.

Use one grain at a time. Chapati, rice, and pulses, milk, ghee, *gud*, and oil are used in ordinary households besides vegetables and fruit. I regard this as an unhealthy combination. Those who get animal protein in the shape of milk, cheese, eggs or meat need not use pulses at all. The poor people get only vegetable protein. If the well-to-do give up pulses and oils, they set free these two essentials for the poor who get neither animal protein nor animal fat. Then the grain eaten should not be sloppy. Half the quantity suffices when it is eaten dry and not dipped in any gravy. It is well to eat it with raw salads such as onion, carrot, radish, salad leaves, tomatoes. An ounce or two of salads serves the purpose of eight ounces of cooked vegetables. Chapatis or bread should not be eaten with milk. To begin with, one meal may be raw vegetables and chapati or bread, and the other cooked vegetables with milk or curds.

Sweet dishes should be eliminated altogether. Instead *gud* or sugar in small quantities may be taken with milk or bread or by itself.

Fresh fruit is good to eat, but only a little is necessary to give tone to the system. It is an expensive article, and an over-indulgence by the well-to-do has deprived the poor and the ailing of an article which they need much more than the well-to-do.

Any medical man who has studied the science of dietetics will certify that what I have suggested can do no harm to the body, on the contrary it must conduce to better health.

This is only one way of saving food-stuff. It is obvious. But by itself it cannot produce much visible effect.

Grain-dealers have to shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor. They should be in touch with the people in their neighbourhood. Congressmen have to visit grain-dealers within their beat and give them the message of the time.

By far the most important part of the work consists in educating the villagers to keep what they have and to induce cultivation of fresh crops wherever water is available. This requires wide-spread and intelligent propaganda. It is not generally known that bananas, potatoes, beetroot, yam and *suran*, and in a measure pumpkin are a food crop easily grown. They can take the place of bread in time of need.

There is too scarcity of money. There may be grain available but no money to buy it with. There is no money because there is no employment. This has to be found. Spinning is the readiest and the handiest. But local needs may supply other sources of labour. Every available source has to be tapped so that there is no want of employment. Only the lazy ones need and must starve. Patient handling will induce even this class to shed their laziness.

The problem of clothing is much easier than feeding, if it is handled well and in time. The mills may not be relied on in these times. There is ample cotton to be had in India. It is a problem for cotton cultivators how to dispose of their stock. The outside market is closed to them. Our mills cannot absorb the whole of the crop. It can be utilised, if the nation takes to spinning not for wages but for the sake of clothing the naked. Of course those who need employment will spin for profit. This number must be limited. They need organising. Much money will be needed for the purpose. But national spinning does not need so much organising. Profit motive being eliminated and willingness being assumed, organisation is reduced to simplest terms.

This is no time for multiplying wheels. They take time to manufacture. Raw material is daily becoming dearer. Wheels cannot be manufactured everywhere. Places where they are can be counted by the fingers of one hand.

Therefore I suggest the plying of the dhanush takli and even the simple takli. The former should be manufactured locally. Indeed it is difficult to manufacture the simple takli at once in lacs. The dhanush takli is the only thing which can be the easiest manufactured. Slivers cannot be supplied to spinners. Each one should get some cotton for himself or herself, and card it as well as may be with the hand or with a home-made small bow such as the children in the Bihar basic schools have. All this can be done because no one is expected to manufacture a large quantity of yarn. If every one of our available millions span for one hour daily, there would be enough yarn to keep every hand-loom going. The reader should know that there are lacs of hand-loom weavers in the land. There is danger of their starving for want of yarn.

Here is a great task for every Congressman to undertake. He has to become a good spinner and carder and know how to manufacture the dhanush takli. Let every Congressman begin with himself and his family and neighbours, and he will find that the life-giving contagion spreads like wild fire which envelops you before you hardly know what you are witnessing.

Any organisation that tackles these two problems successfully will command the love and confidence of



the people. I hope that all will join in this real war effort. It is none the less effective because it is peaceful and constructive.

Will the Princes let their people do this work without let or hindrance? Will Qaide Azam Jinnah allow the members of the Muslim League to co-operate with the Congress workers in this truly national but non-political work which is also humanitarian? There are 23,000 Muslim spinners, carders and weavers earning their daily bread through the A. I. S. A.

On the way to Kashi, 19-1-42

### COMMUNAL UNITY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Freedom will not come through parliamentary effort. Therefore communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust.

How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the permanent majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice, or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular State has no concern.

Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus; must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates. In these provinces the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand and in the supposed Hindu interest. But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic. If he enters these bodies, he can do so only to divide the majority members, i. e. to take sides with one Muslim Party or another. If I could make all Hindu Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies, by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service. I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is a superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them. Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus in at least three Muslim majority provinces, they have a rare opportunity of showing their non-violent strength, their disinterestedness, their utter freedom from the communal taint, and their ability to

submit to the rule of their Muslim fellow countrymen. They will do this not in a huff but as true nationalists and friends of the Muslims. Remaining outside they will probably better protect the just interests of Hindus as citizens. For a Congress Hindu is not any the less a Hindu because he claims to represent equally, as he must, all the other faiths in himself. For as I have said, so far as the State is concerned, its capacity for service stops short of the service of the different faiths, and the services it can render apply to all irrespective of their faiths. Therefore Congressmen have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show the other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's so far as the State is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived, not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? And is not the Congress a voluntary State?

On the way to Kashi, 20-1-42

### Constructive Programme and Government

Will not the working of the constructive programme bring Congressmen into conflict with the Government? This was one of the many questions asked at the meeting of the principal members of the A. I. C. C. I addressed in Wardha on the 17th. My answer was that the whole programme was so conceived as to avoid conflict. Of course the most innocent activity may be so manipulated as to provoke conflict. I expect every Congress worker to do his best to avoid it. But there is no help for it, if the Government prohibit such activities because they are undertaken by Congressmen who believe that the working of the constructive programme will bring Swaraj. That is the only non-violent way to achieve the end. Swaraj by non-violent means must come from the creative effort of those who desire it. The Government should welcome every such effort, unless they want to prevent even cent per cent non-violent movement. In that case conflict will become unavoidable. But I am of opinion that no conflict is possible, at any rate while the war lasts, unless Congress workers want or provoke it. They have to work, work and work. They will make no speeches or demonstrations in doing their constructive work. As I have already said, today most of the items of constructive work happen to be—like feeding and clothing—common cause between the Government and the people.

On the way to Kashi, 19-1-42

M. K. G.

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## TRIUMPH OF NON-VIOLENCE

### History Repeats Itself

The ratification of the Bardoli decision by the A. I. C. C. which met at Wardha on the 15th and 16th of this month is a triumph not of violence but of non-violence. On the other hand, if a bare majority had rejected the Bardoli resolution and adopted one declaring all opposition to war predominantly on the ground of non-violence, it might well have been a triumph of violence. I propose to place before the reader a few facts in order to help him to understand my meaning. When the Working Committee met at Bardoli Gandhiji had drafted for them a resolution reiterating the Congress policy and programme of complete non-participation in the war under all circumstances. A couple of days' discussion with the members was an eye-opener to him. He did not even place the draft before the members. Then came the draft prepared by a committee appointed by the Working Committee. It was a compromise resolution which, as the statements by some members of the Working Committee showed, was not acceptable to at least half the members of the Committee. "Should these members seek to divide the A. I. C. C.?" was the question. The first impulse was in the affirmative. Then came the reactions to the resolution in India and outside. Gandhiji's mind was almost made up before he returned to Sevagram that the first impulse was wrong, and that there should be no attempt to divide the A. I. C. C. Rather than leave it to any of the members of the Working Committee to give the lead to the house, Gandhiji himself in a speech packed with argument commended the resolution on the very ground of non-violence.

History here repeated itself. After the Chauri Chaura decision in 1922 there was the meeting of the A. I. C. C. in Delhi where Gandhiji found such an "under-current of violence, both conscious and unconscious", that he "was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat." A similar disillusionment came at Ahmedabad in 1924 where the four resolutions he moved were passed by a bare majority. He decided that the majority must be regarded as a minority, and rejected ultimately the fruit of the majority vote. "Majorities," he declared, "cannot deceive me," and within a few months he signed an agreement with the late Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbhandhu Das declaring suspension of the non-cooperation movement and a "total surrender on my part". And in a fervent appeal to the so-called No-changers he said: "I have often said, and I repeat for the millionth time, that, if you do not believe in the charkha, you must go to the councils. . . . My appeal to you is to cleanse your hearts and to have charity. Make your hearts as broad as the ocean. That is the teaching of the Koran and the Gita. . . . Why should you say that their politics are corrupt? Heaven protect us from any such calumny of human nature. So long as the world lasts, so long will there be so many differences of opinion, and the greatest achievement of No-changers will be when they make their so-called opponents their truest friends and convert them to the creed of the charkha."

The result of the seeds of non-violence so assiduously sown was the Satyagraha movement of 1930-31, which made India's fight for freedom known throughout the world.

### Misplaced Zeal

If some of those who opposed the resolution, *after* Gandhiji had made a fervent appeal to them not to divide the house, had remembered this past history, they would have held their souls in peace and not advanced arguments which were correct but which lacked reality. Thus when one knew that even the acceptance of the Bardoli resolution was due to Gandhiji's appeal, it was hardly proper to remind them of Simon who betrayed his Master thrice before the cock crew and to tell them that they had thrown their Pilot overboard. When a questioner asked one of the speakers who opposed the resolution whether he preferred non-violence to Independence, he might have said, "Independence won at the expense of non-violence is no Independence at all." Instead he said: "You do not know the great implications of non-violence!" C. R. would have put the case for non-violence in an unassailable way, had he chosen to do so.

### A Dexterous Speech

But he chose to play a different part. It did one's soul good to watch the whole house listen to his dispassionate, closely-reasoned, compact speech with patient and respectful attention. If the advocates of non-violence gave an illustration of bad lawyers spoiling a good case, Rajaji's was an instance of an able lawyer apparently winning a bad case. Born teacher he is a lover of parables and similes. But he used a simile which, though at the moment applauded, was really at his own expense. "Do you think, if I go a hunting, I should hunt for rats and rabbits? I should go in for big game." "Two strings to the bow", or "killing two birds with one stone" may suit the genius of the English language, but the Indian language has *ek panth do kaj* (two errands in one journey). But Rajaji triumphantly used a simile which I should have hesitated ever to associate with the mild Brahman that he is. And then one would like to ask him: "Which is the bigger game of the two—leading a non-violent India to victory, or a violent India to a doubtful victory and a possible humiliating defeat?"

Then he said: "It is thought that I am advising the Congress to throw away the weapon of non-violence"—the weapon he described as "our only weapon"—"and some even go further and say I have actually taken up the weapon of violence. But it is all wrong." This was perfectly correct. But not quite so correct as what followed: "So far as the attainment of Swaraj goes and my general outlook on life goes, I adhere to the principle of non-violence. I have not suddenly changed my attitude. But in certain extensions of the principle I do not share Gandhiji's confidence. For him there is no question of extension—for it is a creed with him, applicable to all circumstances, but it is not a creed with us." There can be no question about the honesty of the argument. But is it correct? Can one who contemplates participation in violent war for purposes of defence against an aggressor or in return for a promise of full freedom claim to adhere to the



principle of non-violence for the attainment of freedom? And has Gandhiji ever asked for an extension of his creed to all circumstances? I have gone over several files of *Young India* to make myself sure if ever Gandhiji ran into that error. Again and again I find him talking of *limited* non-violence. "I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence," he wrote in 1925, "I preach, therefore, non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and, therefore, perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. Before I can preach universal non-violence, I must be wholly free from passions, I must be wholly incapable of sin. Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that. But meanwhile let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as day-light, viz. to win India's freedom with strictly non-violent means. And then under Swaraj you and I shall have a disciplined, intelligent police force that would keep order within and fight raiders from without, if by that time I or someone else does not show a better way of dealing with either."

And this thought has been repeated times without number right up to now.

Rajaji had quite a number of weapons in his armoury. With apparently devastating effect he quoted the General Secretary against himself: "India has often declared its opposition to Nazism and Fascism. Its sympathies have all along been with the Democratic countries. It was therefore prepared to help. It was not, however, possible for it to do this unless its shackles were removed. The Working Committee, therefore, on September 14th issued a statement..... 'If, therefore, England wanted the free and willing help of India, it must declare its war aims,' " and so on. But Rajaji was really not quoting the General Secretary against himself,—for in that paragraph Acharya Kripalani was only summarising the argument leading up to the Working Committee's statement of September 14th and summarising the statement itself—but he was quoting the Working Committee's statement in support of the stand he has consistently taken since the Poona resolution. In doing so, however, he forgot two very vital facts: one—that ever since the framing of that statement there had been a controversy, going on amongst the members of the Working Committee regarding the connotation of the words "free and willing help", Gandhiji always meaning thereby moral support; two—that Acharya Kripalani was always of the same view as Gandhiji. In Poona the things came to a head, the Working Committee decided that not moral but material help was meant, and also decided that India pledged to non-violence for the attainment of Independence could give it. That compelled Gandhiji to withdraw. The Poona resolution was bad not, as he explained later and during his recent Wardha speech, because of the position taken up, but because he was wrong in having abdicated his function and having allowed the Working Committee to interpret non-violence.

He came back in Bombay, not because he discovered any new political points of contact with the sponsors of the Poona resolution, but because he believed he had discovered that he had succeeded in weaning them from the idea of violent participation in

the war, and that they had come into line with him in opposing participation on *among other grounds* non-violence also, to which the Congress creed had pledged them.

### Another Fallacy

In this connection I would like to refer to an argument used by Pandit Jawaharlal with the same apparently devastating effect. "If," he said, (I am paraphrasing his Hindustani) "we say we cannot participate on the sole ground of non-violence, what would the world think of us? They would feel that we were opposing the war as mere pacifists and that we had no political grounds, and Britain would successfully delude the world into believing that beyond pacifism we had no case at all." I wonder how Panditji could say this in face of the fact that Gandhiji had made it abundantly clear in his letter to the Maulana that the opposition was *principally* on the ground of non-violence. The world knows that all responsible people in India—whether pacifists or non-pacifists—are sworn enemies of India's slavery, and Britain cannot possibly delude the world.

"Then," it may be argued, "the principal ground is political and the non-violence ground is subsidiary. Why should Gandhiji describe the ground of non-violence as the principal one?" Well, there's the rub. What Gandhiji has been trying to explain, and has for the time being failed to explain to many of his colleagues, is that the principal ground is non-violence, *because* we are pledged to win India's Independence by peaceful and legitimate means. That is an overwhelmingly political ground and no religious or ethical one. It is impossible to lay too much emphasis on this point, if one honestly wants to understand the meaning of the present controversy.

There was another argument in Panditji's speech that I would like to advert to. He explained most eloquently how the present war and the two "years of horror" had strengthened his predilection for non-violence. "But," he said, "we have to choose between two evils. Gandhiji has himself taught us that violence is any day preferable to abject cowardice. How can we therefore bind ourselves as regards the future?" There is no question as regards the future. And Gandhiji would be the first man to advise violent defence in preference to cowardly abandonment of hearths and homes and women and children.

### The Same Language

And when one comes to think of it, the consistency of argument and even the identity of language used by Gandhiji nearly twenty years ago with that of today is striking indeed. Take these two or three extracts which might have been written or spoken only the other day: "Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I can be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle."

And this: "I would not hesitate to turn the Congress into an exclusively khaddar-producing and khaddar propaganda organisation till the attainment of Swaraj, just as I would not hesitate, if I believed in



the use of arms and giving violent battle to England, to make the Congress an organisation exclusively devoted to training the nation in the use of arms." Also: "I have recognised that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only then India ceases to be the land of my love, though she be the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray."

### Why

Gandhiji in his speech did make it clear that the resolution was taking us back, he also made it clear that in substance it repeated the Poona resolution, and he might even have said that so long as the Congress creed was there the resolution was unconstitutional. But his non-violence would not let him use that argument, unassailable as it would have been. Never was the precept of 'agreeing with thine adversary quickly', and 'going twain with him who asks you to go a mile' practised with such thorough-going deliberation. And he put the whole burden of the future on those who were for out and out non-violence. It was for them to employ all the twentyfour hours in the constructive programme, it was for them to show that the constructive programme meant the construction of Swaraj. "The whole key to the situation lies in the hands of No-changers," as he used to say in 1924.

And what he said then applies with greater force today in that we are faced with a much greater danger. "If we are few," he said, "we must perish in the attempt to quench the conflagration raging about us. If there are such No-changers, they cannot quarrel with the agreement (with the Swarajists). For it is but a method of finding out the number of unbending and unbendable No-changers — No-changers whose love will stand the severest test and whose faith in the triple constructive programme will, if necessary, outlast the faithlessness of the rest of India." The only difference is that the programme is not threefold, nor even thirteenfold, it is thirtyfold today.

As he said it in his brief English speech in reply to a question by Shri Prakasam: "The suspension of satyagraha has connection only with the present condition of the country, and I want every single man who thinks with me to remain outside and do work rather than go to jail and read the Koran and the Gita and lead an easy life there. I won't let them lead an easy life. Jawaharlal will ask for diaries from thousands of men. He is not going to sleep. Therefore, if you will go away with the real message to the country, do not criticise this resolution. Nobody is rendered incapable of giving the fullest possible service, in fact he is made capable of the fullest growth, by reason of this resolution. Civil disobedience remains under my control, and the reason for its suspension is wholly extraneous to my retirement from office. Every one of you has to give a good account of yourself. If all will pull your full weight in the fulfilment of the constructive programme, you will find a different India in six months' time."

Sevagram, 19-1-42

M. D.

## QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

### Congress and A. R. P.

Q. Can a Congressman belong to A. R. P. and such other committees connected with the war?

A. I think not. But this does not mean that he will render no help in caring for those who may be injured by bombs or otherwise. On the contrary he will be expected to be most assiduous in rendering such help.

### Economic Equality

Q. While working the constructive programme can a Congressman preach economic equality? How can working the civil disobedience programme bring it about?

A. You can certainly preach it, if your speech is strictly non-violent and not in the manner of some who, I know, have preached forcible dispossession of land-owners and capitalists. But I have shown a better way than preaching. The constructive programme takes the country a long way towards the goal. This is the most auspicious time for it. The charkha and the allied industries, if fully successful, practically abolish all inequalities, both social and economic. The rising consciousness of the strength which non-violence gives to the people, and their intelligent refusal to co-operate in their slavery must bring about equality.

### Strengthen the Organisation

Q. What is the meaning of strengthening the Congress organisation?

A. You can strengthen it no doubt by enlisting members who know the meaning of the fundamental article of the Congress, namely attainment of Poorna Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. Enlisting of bogus members and members for seizing power in the Congress is vicious and harmful.

There is no room for power politics within the Congress, if the Congress is to end the power or the system that grinds the people and be itself in power. Therefore real strengthening of the organisation consists in every Congressman working the constructive programme to its fullest capacity. Enlisting bona fide members without much effort provides running expense of the Congress, only if the enlisting itself does not eat up the subscriptions you collect from members.

On the way to Kashi, 20-1-42

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